**Purpose of Community Diagnosis**

* Demographic data plus all the vital   
  health statistics
* Utilisation of health services especially of maternal and child health clinics
* The causes of morbidity and mortality (by age and sex)
* State of nutrition, diet, weaning patterns and the growth of preschool and   
  school-going children
* Patterns of leadership and communication within the community
* State of mental health and common causes of stress
* State of the environment including water, housing and disease vectors
* The community’s knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) in relation to   
  health-related activities
* Epidemiological details of   
  endemic diseases
* Available resources and services for overall development of health-related activities for example, education, agriculture, veterinary and social services
* Socio-cultural and socio-economic class divisions within the community   
  (social stratification)

**Ethical Considerations in Community Diagnosis**

* Obtaining permission to enter into the community boundaries
* Obtaining informed consent before interviewing patients, families or groups
* Establishing rapport before exploring sensitive areas
* Ensuring confidentiality of the data collected
* Selecting good interviewers
* Training interviewers

**The Process of Community Diagnosis**

1. Exploration
2. Planning of the survey
3. Developing and pre-testing survey tools
4. Execution of the survey and data analysis
5. Report writing, dissemination and community action

**Exploring the Community (Community Inventory)**

Exploration simply means mapping out of a community in order to learn or discover about it. It is also known as community inventory. Ideally, you should only carry out a community diagnosis after a request by the community or the people involved in providing health care. The exploration phase is made up of three main activities:

* Seeking permission and informing the   
  various leaders
* Seeking reactions of members of   
  the community
* Gathering background data about   
  the community

Before you design a questionnaire it is important for you to know what information you need to collect and how it will be used. It would help you to make a list of what you want to know. In other words, what do you really want to find out or achieve with the questionnaire?

**DEVELOPING AND PRE-TESTING TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION**

**Qualities of a Good Questionnaire**

A good questionnaire has the following qualities:

* Has simple and specific questions. Avoids wording that is above the vocabulary or reading skills of the respondents.
* Has short and precise questions. The number of questions should not be too many or else they will put off the person being interviewed. In other words, keep it short and   
  simple (KISS).
* Avoids use of abbreviations or jargon.
* Avoids questions that are too demanding and   
  time consuming.
* Avoids bias in questions. Biased questions influence people to answer in a way that does not accurately reflect their position. For example, a question like ’Do you agree with the majority of the people that health standards are falling?’ implies that the respondent should agree.
* Avoids making assumptions. Questions such as ’How many children do you have?’ assume that the respondent has children. You should only ask this question after establishing the situation with the question ’Do you have children?’
* Avoids double questions. For example, ’Did the MCH talk help to identify ways to improve the sanitation and nutrition of your children?’ It is better to ask about sanitation and nutrition separately.
* Has clear wording. Words such as majority, older people, regularly, might mean different things to different people and so should be avoided.
* Questions ask about simple common happenings.
* Questions range from known to unknown and from simple   
  to complex.
* All the questions should relate to the purpose of study. Eliminate ’nice to know’ questions,  you may end up with 'information overload’.
* Questions are acceptable to the people included in the survey.You should view the questions through the respondents eye and ask yourself the following:  
   - Will the question be seen as reasonable?  
   - Will it infringe on the respondents privacy?  
   - Will the respondent be able and willing to   
     answer the question?
* Questions should not screen disease if no effective treatment can be offered for the cases found or if the condition is rare.
* Type of question should either be open- or closed-ended.
* Questionnaire must be pre-tested before executing the survey. This helps to identify and eliminate questions that are defective or may lead to wrong information. You may even need to rephrase the questionnaire so that it can elicit the correct responses.

**Types of Information**

Questionaires can help you collect four different types of information.

[Understanding](file:///D:\JACOB\JEREMY\Module%203%20Community%20Health%20Nursing\Unit%205%20Community%20Diagnosis\pages\pg20060220073936510.html)

Information about what people know or how well they understand something, that is, knowledge. For example, what is the major cause of accidental deaths among children in the home?

[Beliefs, Attitudes and Opinions](file:///D:\JACOB\JEREMY\Module%203%20Community%20Health%20Nursing\Unit%205%20Community%20Diagnosis\pages\pg20060220073936510.html)

Information about people’s beliefs, attitudes and opinions. Here you would be asking people to share with you their thoughts, feelings, ideas, judgment or their way of thinking. For example, in your opinion does positive self-esteem prevent drug abuse   
among adolescents?

[Behaviour](file:///D:\JACOB\JEREMY\Module%203%20Community%20Health%20Nursing\Unit%205%20Community%20Diagnosis\pages\pg20060220073936510.html)

Information about people’s behaviour. That is, what people have done in the past, present, and what they plan to do in the future. For example, have you ever attended an antenatal clinic?

[Attributes](file:///D:\JACOB\JEREMY\Module%203%20Community%20Health%20Nursing\Unit%205%20Community%20Diagnosis\pages\pg20060220073936510.html)

Information about peoples attributes. That is, their personal or demographic characteristics. For example, age, education, occupation and income.

When you design a questionnaire you should be very clear about the objectives and type of information you desire to collect. Otherwise you may end up collecting peoples opinions when in actual fact you wanted to document their behaviour.

***Remember:  
The response or information you obtain is only as good as the question. To get correct information you must ask the   
right question.***

**Types of Question**

A questionnaire should be laid out in such a way that it provides easy flow from one topic to another. It should have both open- and   
closed-ended questions. They should be arranged in such a way that they allow natural flow of discussion.

**Open-ended Question**

An open-ended question is a type of question that allows the respondent to provide their own answer. It encourages the respondent to think and describe a situation in their own words. The respondent is not given any answers to select from. The answer given is best recorded in the respondent’s own words. Although it is the easiest way to ask for information the responses are not easy to analyse. The answers are bound to be varied and so you need to categorise   
and summarise them.

 Open-ended questions are useful because they give more information on:

* Facts and details which the researcher may not be familiar with
* Opinions, attitudes and suggestions
* Sensitive issues

The following are examples of open-ended questions:

1. What did the traditional birth attendants do when your labour started?
2. What do you think are the reasons for the high dropout rate of health committee members?
3. What would you do if you noticed that your daughter (a schoolgirl) has a relationship with her teacher?

As you can see, these questions require deeper thinking and provoke the respondent to elaborate when responding.

**Closed-ended Question**

These are questions that offer the respondents a list of possible answers to choose from. They are specific and useful when you are interested in certain aspects of an issue. Although they produce more uniform answers than open-ended questions, they depend upon our knowing and including all the relevant answers in the list. To view a table giving three examples of closed-ended questions click the link below.

**EXECUTION OF THE SURVEY, DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

**Execution of the Survey**

This is another important step in the process of community diagnosis. It requires just as much care as the planning stage. It involves going out to the field to collect information from the sample population you have selected. There are three stages involved in data collection.

These are:

1. Interviewing the respondents
2. Data collection
3. Data handling

You will now look at these stages in turn.

**Stage One: Interviewing the Respondents**

By the time you get to this stage, you have already developed the survey instruments, trained the interviewers on how to use these instruments and even pre-tested them. You do this in order to ensure that the correct standards are adhered to during the actual survey. Once the real survey begins, you should continue to work closely with the interviewers.   
  
Your presence reassures them and they also get the opportunity to clarify issues that may arise. On your part, you get assured that the interviewers are continuing to follow the techniques you   
taught them.

When the interviewers approach a respondent, they should:

* Introduce themselves by name
* Show their identity cards for the activity
* Show their letter of permission to carry out   
  the exercise
* Explain why they have come and the purpose of the survey
* Establish rapport with the respondent/s so that they can feel at ease with each other
* Ask if it is convenient to interview the person at that time
* Should the person refuse to cooperate, the interviewers should do their best to persuade such a person to agree

If it is convenient to interview the person at the time you have requested, give the client/family time to be comfortable and proceed. If not, ask for a more convenient time when this will be possible.

 This must be within the prescribed period of the exercise as indicated in the permit. In which case the interviewer must return punctually as agreed upon with the family or individual.

If the person refuses to cooperate and remains adamant, the interviewers should politely thank the person for their time spent and proceed to the next interview. Sometimes people may refuse to respond to the question raised.

***Remember the rights of the individual. The respondent has the right to refuse to participate in an interview or experiment or medication.***

There are various reasons why people do not answer questions in a survey. These include:

* If the people were not informed of the survey, its objectives and when it would  
  be performed
* If for some reason the person to be interviewed is temporarily away from home
* Lack of interest in cooperating or active opposition to the survey
* In order to reduce the incidence of such opposition from your sample group, you should always make sure that the community is well informed about the study. If the target respondent is temporarily away from home, the interviewer should make arrangements to return when he or she is in. People who lack interest need a clearer explanation and persuasion so that they can see how they will benefit from the exercise. Activists can be difficult; if they remain adamant just politely thank them and let them free. They are just exercising their rights. If you find that a large number of people in your group are non-respondents, you will need to do a random selection from that group and re-approach them.   
    
  The results you get from the new sample will be representative of the entire non-respondent group. Compare the results with the original sample of all respondents and calculate the difference.

**Stage Two: Data Collection**

Interviewers should be advised to use a pencil when filling out forms so that it is easier to make corrections. They should not erase a wrong response. If a mistake is made, the incorrect response should be crossed out and the correct response marked above it. Incorrect responses should not be erased because it is possible that if the erasure is incomplete, the response might not be legible or might be confused with a different response. The interviewer should fill in the responses at the time they are given. No response should be filled in afterwards because the interviewer may remember the   
response incorrectly.   
  
Ensure that every interviewer has all the tools they need to collect data such as tools for anthropometric measurements and laboratory specimen containers.

You should avail a convenient carrier for these tools and check the packs daily to ensure that any specimens collected were handled correctly. It is good to remind the interviewers to recheck their measurements before they leave the client to avoid mistakes. They should also check the forms before they leave the respondent in order to be sure that all relevant information is satisfactory filled in the appropriate space provided.

If the survey involves the collection of laboratory specimens, then you should make arrangements for their safe storage before they are transported to the appropriate place for analysis. Laboratory specimens need special care especially when handling, storing and transporting them because one lapse could cause the loss of an entire   
day’s specimens.

At the end of the day, all the forms should be checked thoroughly by someone other than the interviewer. If data is missing it may be necessary for the interviewer to return the next day to collect it. At this stage it may be possible to begin tallying the results so that when the analysis begins all you have to do is add up the tallies instead of going through all the forms since the first interview

The appropriate time for data collection was already covered in the sub section on how to plan a survey. Can you remember what   
you covered?

* When the sample population will be available
* When the team will be available
* During an appropriate season when people are not too busy planting
* On days other than public holidays and weekends when people are less likely to be at home

During data collection, it is very important to ensure that there is quality control so that you do not end up with false or misleading conclusions.

To ensure quality data you should:

* Avoid bias when designing the questionnaire as explained earlier
* Provide an instruction sheet on how to ask certain questions and how to   
  record answers
* Select interviewers with care
* Select and train the assistants carefully in all the procedures together   
  with interviewers
* Involve them in the pre-testing phase
* Limit the number of interviews that interviewers can conduct in a day so that they do not become too exhausted
* Identify assistants to carry out quality checks everyday

This is the stage where you check data for completeness and organise it for analysis. The following guidelines will help you.

* Check to confirm that all the forms have been completed satisfactorily
* Ensure that questionnaires are numbered
* Identify one person to be responsible for storing data and specimens securely
* Record forms should be sequenced and stored with clear labels
* Make sure that all the information you need has been collected in a standard way
* Develop an insight into the possible ways of analysing data
* Ensure availability of any resources needed for analysis, such as a computer

Once you have collected the data, it is completely meaningless unless you can extract meaning through analysis.

You will now look at how to analyse the data.

**Data Analysis**

The data you obtain from the field is known as ’raw data’. In this state, it does not give much information and is therefore difficult to interpret. That is why it needs further work known as data analysis.

Data analysis is the separation and categorisation of numerical data into groups in order to understand its meaning. Statistical methods are used to do this because they:

* Summarise the data.
* Make inferences about the data. This means that data which has been gathered on a sample can be used to indicate what is probably happening to the entire population so as to make judgement about them.

The process of data analysis involves the following steps:

* Data cleaning
* Sorting or tallying
* Coding and entering data

Analysis of results

**REPORT WRITING, DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNITY ACTION**

**Feedback and Report Writing**

Feedback means giving comments about how well or badly a person is doing in order to help them do better. It is a form of communication. You will recall that during the planning stage, it was said that the community will only cooperate if they perceive some beneficial results from their cooperation. So after your survey is done, those in the community who cooperated with you are entitled to receive some form of feedback. They want to know what   
you found.

When planning feedback you need to consider to whom it shall be given and in what form. This will help you to deliver the message effectively and in a way that it is well understood by the   
people concerned.

All individuals in the community who are concerned with the health of the people are entitled to feedback. The feedback table below gives a summary of the different types of feedback, who should receive it and when.

**Community Health Action**

A community survey identifies a host of health problems that need to be addressed. It may have revealed a need for greater emphasis on MCH services or environmental sanitation. Therefore, you need to sit down with the community to prioritise and plan what you going to do about the identified health problems. In short, you need to mobilise them to take action.

**Mobilse Community Action**

You can mobilise the community through a number of interventions, namely:

* Making them aware of their problems and promoting primary health care
* Health education
* Immunisation
* Environmental improvement

You have already covered these interventions in great detail in different units and modules of this course. However, you will now briefly look at them from the perspective of community diagnosis.

**Creating Awareness and Promoting Primary Health Care**

As you will recall from the lesson on PHC in unit two of this module, the essence of the community based health care approach is to stimulate community interest and participation in health promotive, disease preventive and simple curative activities. For the community to participate effectively they require a number of support structures. These are:

* A multi-disciplinary or inter-sectoral team  
  which includes health workers as well as experts from other sectors such as agriculture, water, energy, and so on.
* Establishment of community structures.
* A consensus of opinion between community and professionals. Research has shown that communities have the ability to not only identify their problems but also rank them in order of importance.

The only difference between them and     professionals might be the way they determine the cause of the problem. While professionals see causation in scientific terms, communities may see it in terms of evil spirit. If you can succeed in making them see that in addition to evil spirits poor latrine usage has something to do with the prevalence of intestinal parasites, then your job would be well done.

Structures that are in place to establish care of a community’s health include the establishment of health committees as well as the selection of individuals for training as community health workers. The village health committees and community health workers play a very important role in the implementation of activities that have been agreed on. Your role as a community health nurse is to facilitate the process and guide them to work efficiently.

**Health Education**

Health education is not just about sending out posters and pamphlets to the community. It is about listening and finding out why people do things the way they do. It is about stimulating their interest in their health problems through discussion and sometimes by example. It is also about giving people information and helping them to set priorities and improve their own health.

Health education cannot be prescribed in doses! You will therefore need to target individuals, families and the community at large with health messages using the media that is available   
and affordable.